



Diandra Jay Staff Photographer

The Career Transition Center in Long Beach, for which Vivian Hochschild is a program specialist, will receive part of the \$9.9 million the city was given for training.

Funds help job, homeless plans

LONG BEACH: City is getting \$9.9 million for training and rental assistance programs.

By Paul Eakins Staff Writer

LONG BEACH — The city of Long Beach is receiving \$9.9 million in federal stimulus money that will provide job training programs for adults and youths plus assistance for the homeless and the near-homeless.

The funding, which the City Council voted Tuesday night to use, pays for 1,200 new youth jobs beginning this summer and may decrease homelessness in Long Beach by helping people before they are on the street, city officials said Wednesday.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is providing Long Beach with \$6.37 million for the Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network's job programs and \$3.56 million for the new federal Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program.

The adult work program will be implemented immediately to provide increased job training, temporary financial assistance for trainees and more outreach to small businesses to help them take advantage of opportunities, said Bryan Rogers, executive director of the Workforce Investment Network. The organization runs five career transition centers in Long Beach, Signal Hill and San Pedro.

Next week, the Workforce Investment Network will start recruiting youths to fill 1,200 work positions, almost doubling the total number of youth jobs provided by the organization to 2,500, Rogers said.

"It's going to provide them an opportunity to get that first work experience," Rogers said, noting that the youths also will receive a certificate of work readiness. "It says this person has good work ethic, has skills and is ready to go into the work force."

The youth work program places participants in public sector, nonprofit and other jobs, but they will actually be paid by the Workforce Investment Network, Rogers said.

For information on the employment programs, go to www.pacificgatewayworkforce.com, or call **562-570-WORK** (9675).

While some people are striving to improve their job skills, others simply need a hand up in basic living expenses.

This is where the new homeless and housing programs come in, although they won't be in place until later in the year, said Susan Price, homeless services officer for the Department of Health and Human Services.

Two main homelessness programs are coming out of the federal funding — gap rental assistance and the Rapid Re-Housing Program.

Gap rental assistance provides qualified low-income households with money for up to six months of back rent to help them reach financial stability, Price said.

"There have been people in a gray area who haven't been eligible for homelessness funding, but they're struggling," Price said.

The other program, Rapid Re-Housing, will give up to 18 months of a rental subsidy for people who are currently homeless.

The details of Long Beach's program are still being worked out with stakeholders, but the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development calls for an assessment every three months to determine that those receiving aid are trying to find work and meeting other requirements, Price said. She said Long Beach will probably require more frequent assessments.

The homeless and housing assistance plans must be approved by HUD before they can begin. Price said she will release more details on how to apply for the program later this year.

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